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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mesa Man Involved in Drug Organization Receives 16-Year Prison Term

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Feb. 22, 2008) Attorney General Terry Goddard announced that Levi Mendivil Vega, 27, of Mesa, has been sentenced to 16 years in prison after pleading guilty to one count of participating in a criminal syndicate and one count of offering to sell marijuana. Both counts are felony charges. Maricopa County Judge Paul McMurdie also last week sentenced Mendivil Vega to five years probation following his prison sentence.

Mendivil Vega was a key member of an organization that transported large quantities of marijuana, cocaine and methamphetamine from Mexico to Arizona. In Arizona, several stash houses were used to store the drugs before they were transported to the Midwest. The organization used stolen vehicles to transport the drugs in an effort to thwart law enforcement interdiction. Many of the members of the organization are Mesa gang members who were recruited by the Chicago-based Latin King criminal street gang to help establish a drug distribution network between Arizona and Chicago.

This case was the result of a joint investigation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency in Phoenix and the Mesa Police Department. Assistant Attorney General Patrick Zinicola prosecuted this case.

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